

MLB Three elected to Hall of Fame

Tim Raines, Jeff Bagwell, Ivan Rodriguez make the cut this year

By RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jeff Bagwell, Tim Raines and Ivan Rodriguez were elected to baseball's Hall of Fame on Wednesday, earning the honor as Trevor Hoffman and Vladimir Guerrero fell just short.

Steroids-tainted stars Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens were passed over for the fifth straight year by the Baseball Writers' Association of America. But they received a majority of votes for the first time and could be in position to gain election in coming years.



Bagwell



Raines



Rodriguez

Bagwell, on the ballot for the seventh time after falling 15 votes short last year, received 381 of 442 votes for 86.2 percent. Players needed 75 percent, which came to 332 votes this year.

"Anxiety was very, very high," Bagwell said. "I wrote it on a ball tonight. It was kind of cool."

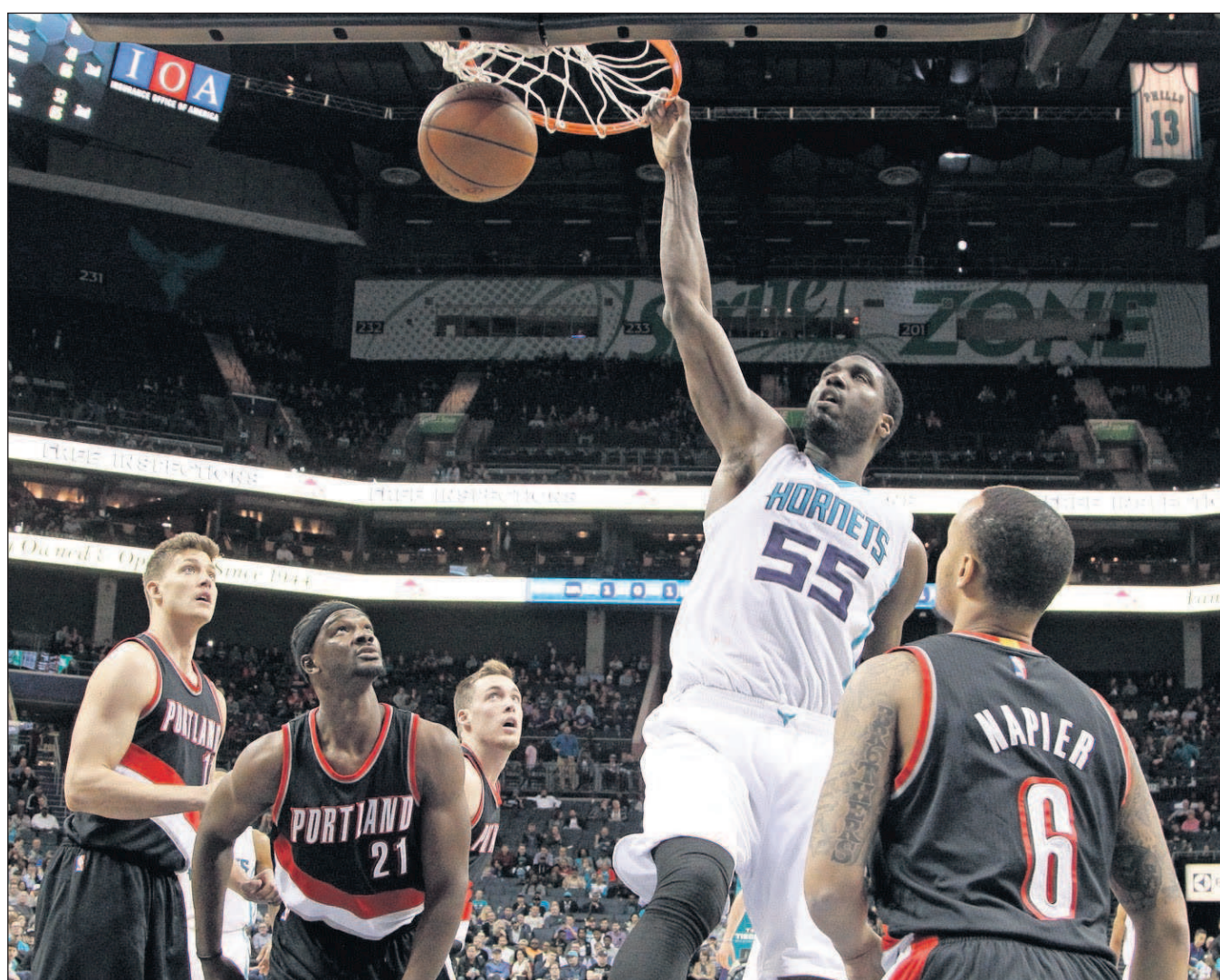
In his 10th and final year of eligibility, Raines was on 380 ballots (86 percent). Rodriguez received 336 votes (76 percent) to join Johnny Bench in 1989 as the only catchers elected on the first ballot.

Hoffman was five votes shy and Guerrero 15 short.

Edgar Martinez was next at 58.6 percent, followed by Clemens at 54.1 percent, Bonds at 53.8 percent, Mike

See HALL OF FAME/2B

NBA Walker, Hibbert sting Blazers



Charlotte Hornets' Roy Hibbert (55) dunks over Portland Trail Blazers' Shabazz Napier (6) and Noah Vonleh (21) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Charlotte, N.C., Wednesday, Jan. 18, 2017. The Hornets won 107-85.

AP Photo/Chuck Burton

Charlotte snaps skid, Portland loses third straight

By STEVE REED
Associated Press



CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Kemba Walker is focused on Charlotte's record. He isn't very interested in the All-Star game right now.

Walker scored 23 points, and the Hornets stopped a five-game slide with a 107-85 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers on Wednesday night.

"We haven't been doing a great job of winning consistently (so) the All-Star game is the last thing I'm going to think about right now," Walker said.

While Walker is brushing off talk about next month's game in New Orleans, he is making a strong case for a spot on the Eastern Conference team. He is averaging 23 points and shooting 41.3 percent from 3-point range this season.

Walker went 4 for 8 from behind the arc against Portland and 8 for 14 from the field overall. But he said he doesn't think he has done enough this year to make the All-Star game for the first time, citing the team's 21-21 record.

"Not really, if you ask me,"

Walker said. "Especially because of where my team is. But like I said, I really don't care honestly."

Coach Steve Clifford said Walker is playing at an All-Star level, but doesn't know if he will be selected.

"It's not a question of whether or not he's playing like an All-Star — he's an All-Star-caliber guard, no question about it," Clifford said. "The factors will be looking at the other point guards in the East. The East is loaded. Point guard is the best position in our league right now and also, a lot of other guys are playing on teams with better records than ours. It's about winning."

The Hornets snapped an eight-game streak of allowing at least 100 points.

Charlotte led 79-72 after three quarters but blew the game open in the fourth behind eight quick points from Frank Kaminsky. The reserve

had all 11 of his points in the final quarter, including three 3-pointers.

Walker had a big first half, hitting 6 of 9 shots and three 3-pointers to help the Hornets build a 54-46 lead.

TIP-INS
Trail Blazers: Made all 11 free throws, but shot 8 of 31 from beyond the 3-point arc.

Hornets: Bench outscored Portland's reserves 44-22.

HIBBERT'S BIG NIGHT
Charlotte center Roy Hibbert played what Clifford called the best game of his season.

The 7-foot-2 Hibbert, who came in averaging 5.2 points per game, had a season-high 16 points on 7-of-8 shooting and provided two of the game's biggest highlights.

He brought the crowd to its feet on a drop-step drive through the lane and an unexpected one-handed dunk over Meyers Leonard. A few minutes later, Hibbert threw a back-door alley-oop pass intended for Kaminsky that inadvertently went in. Hibbert didn't even crack a smile as he jogged back down court.

"That was a helluva pass, shot — I don't know what it was," Walker said with a laugh. "I'm just glad it went in."

Hibbert, who has battled through knee issues this season, said he wasn't trying to score, but glad it went in.

"That was a bad pass and a bad shot, that's all I can say," Hibbert said.

LOSING WAYS

Damian Lillard scored 21 points and C.J. McCollum had 18 for Portland, which has lost three straight and 16 of 22 since Dec. 5.

"As a group we have to let last year go," Portland center Mason Plumlee said. "If it was the first 10 games of the season we could talk about building on last year. This is a new team, this is a new group and we aren't playing how we did last year so it's a new season, new challenges. We have to make the most of this group and this team, and the situation we are in."

TURNOVERS
Charlotte turned 16 Portland turnovers into 21 points.

"We had some turnovers and they took advantage of every little thing," Lillard said. "It seemed like they were getting what they wanted. They played a comfortable game and we didn't make them very uncomfortable."

NFL Don't expect big spending by Seahawks on offensive line

Seattle more likely to reconstruct position through draft

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — Being an offensive lineman for the Seattle Seahawks this season was a tough proposition.

No players drew more ire and more criticism from analysts and fans than the ones responsible for protecting quar-

terback Russell Wilson. Much of the criticism was justified. The main reason Seattle ranked 25th in the NFL in rushing and allowed Wilson to be sacked 42 times was issues by a young, inexperienced group up front.

But all those hoping the Seahawks would start over and spend big to bring in a completely new offensive line next season were given a dose of reality by Pete Carroll this week.

It's not going to happen. "We're going to work really hard this offseason to make

sure that we make that spot really competitive again. We're not going to rest on anything or set back, we think we've got it now. We'll continue to work," Carroll said. "There's opportunities, of course, in the draft and free agency and all of that, that we're open to. We'll never turn away from any of those chances. But if nothing happened these guys are coming back, and they're going to get after it."

That's not necessarily what Seattle fans wanted to hear: The

See SEAHAWKS/2B



Seattle Seahawks offensive linemen Justin Britt, left, and Garry Gilliam talk as players clean out their lockers at the Virginia Mason Athletic Center in Renton, Wash., on Sunday.

Genna Martin/seattlepi.com via AP

Sports shorts

Pliskova cruising at Aussie Open

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — U.S. Open finalist Karolina Pliskova has carried her title-winning form in the warmup tournament into the season's first major, dropping just four games en route to the third round at the Australian Open.

Pliskova was leading 6-0, 4-0 against Anna Blinkova in the second round on Thursday before the 18-year-old Russian qualifier, ranked 189th, held serve and later held up her arm to acknowledge the cheers from the crowd.

Fifth-seeded Pliskova finished off the 6-0, 6-2 in less than an hour she won her first-round match 6-2, 6-0.

"It's always good to be in the zone," said Pliskova, who won the Brisbane International title earlier this month. "It can always be a bit better."

The match lasted just 59 minutes.



Pliskova

"Let's put the cards on the table. Real is real. If I was a different complexion, I think people and fans would treat me a different way."

— Tyron Woodley
UFC welterweight champion during an appearance on ESPN's Sportscenter saying that because he is black the UFC has not promoted him the same as it would other champions, and fans have not embraced him like other champions. Woodley, 34, was born in Ferguson, Missouri.

NASCAR throwback race to honor 1985-1989 era

DARLINGTON, S.C. (AP) — Style up those mullets and pull out the Guns 'N Roses tapes, NASCAR is celebrating the late 1980s.

Darlington Raceway officials announced Wednesday they will honor the 1985-89 era of NASCAR racing, the third straight year the track has hosted a throwback weekend for the Southern 500.

The track began hosting throwback weekends two years ago when race teams sported long-ago paint schemes and drivers dressed in late 1960s and early 1970s outfits. Darlington Raceway President Kerry Sharp says the weekend was popular with both fans and race teams.

The Southern 500 will be run on Sunday, Sept. 3.

THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1972 — Sandy Koufax of the Los Angeles Dodgers becomes the youngest player elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame at 36.

2005 — LeBron James becomes the youngest player (20 years, 20 days) in NBA history to record a triple-double, with 27 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists in Cleveland's 107-101 win over Portland.

2006 — Tennessee coach Pat Summitt gets her 900th victory in her first shot at the milestone, as the Lady Vols rally from their biggest deficit this season to beat Vanderbilt.

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